



## Prevent Graffiti: Get the Facts

[www.graffitihurts.com.au](http://www.graffitihurts.com.au)

### 1. What is graffiti?

You've probably seen graffiti somewhere in your community. It's the words, colours, and shapes drawn or scratched on buildings, overpasses, train cars, desks, and other surfaces. It's done without permission and across Australia it's against the law and costs local governments over \$250million a year in removal and eradication.

The term graffiti comes from the Greek word *graphein*, which means, "to write". Graffiti today ranges from simple, one-colour monikers (like a nickname), called "tags", repeated on many surfaces to complex compositions of several colours.

### 2. How is a community really "hurt" by graffiti?

Graffiti vandalism is a gateway crime and sends a signal that nobody cares, attracting other forms of anti-social activities to a neighbourhood.

Graffiti drains tax and rate payers' dollars. Funds that could be used for schools, roads, parks, and other community improvements, are used for graffiti clean ups.

Graffiti decreases a resident's feeling of safety. Neighbourhoods with graffiti see a decrease in property values, loss of business growth and tourism, as well as a reduction in users of public transport.

### 3. What is the best way to prevent graffiti?

The most effective way to prevent graffiti is to remove it promptly. While this may be difficult, studies show that removal within 24 to 48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of reoccurrence.

Consistent enforcement of state and local laws with strict penalties for graffiti vandalism is also effective. In many communities residence can report graffiti using a designated 1800 number.

Residence can also "adopt areas of their community" and keep it graffiti free. Or, turn a graffiti-plagued wall into a community paint brush mural.

### 4. Do "legal walls" really work?

Communities that have tried "legal" walls, an area that permits graffiti, find them ineffective at preventing graffiti. Many cities and councils across Australia have all found them to be "a failure".

While well intentioned, legal walls send a mixed message and often cause more harm than good. They may appear to work at first, but after a period of time, the surrounding areas also become covered with graffiti. Data also shows no decrease in arrests for graffiti in cities where there are legal walls.

### 5. How do you remove graffiti?

There are several ways to remove graffiti. The best method for removal is determined by the amount of graffiti, its location, and the vandalized surface. The low-cost method is the paint out, which is simply to paint over the graffiti. Many city graffiti abatement personnel use solvents or chemicals to remove graffiti. Pressure washing the surface is also used.

Download the Helpful Removal Guide from the Community Resource section on the Graffiti Hurts – Australia website ([www.graffitihurts.com.au](http://www.graffitihurts.com.au))

Visit the Supporters Removal Help section on the Graffiti Hurts – Australia website and search the directory for professional help. ([www.graffitihurts.com.au](http://www.graffitihurts.com.au))

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### **Ten Things You Can Do To Prevent Graffiti**

1. Get educated. Learn about graffiti, how it impacts your community, and who is responsible for graffiti prevention and clean-up in your area.
2. Report graffiti to the appropriate your local police and your local council. Both keep a track of graffiti vandalism to better develop programs in your area, without it being reported they are not in a position to know or act on it. Also don't think someone else has reported it, remember it's your community and your money being used to remove this vandalism.
3. Organise a paint-out. Contact your local Council to support the paint out and help with advice in gathering supplies and community volunteers to remove graffiti in your neighbourhood.
4. Plan a paint-brush mural to cover a wall continuously plagued with graffiti. Graffiti Hurts – Australia's Community Paint Brush Mural program provides advice on how to achieve the best results in undertaking a 'Community Paint Brush Mural' (visit our on-line store to purchase of copy of the Graffiti Hurts – Australia's Paint Brush Mural manual'
5. Coordinate a graffiti awareness campaign at your school or in the community. Contact and use the help of your Crime Prevention officer at your local police station and Local Government.
6. Make a presentation on graffiti prevention to your school, class, or neighbourhood group.
7. Adopt an area in your school or community and make sure it stays clean and free of graffiti.
8. Plant trees or other greenery near a graffiti-plagued wall. This will help prevent access and reduce the 'fame' a vandal seeks by doing graffiti.
9. Ask your community to install lighting in areas that are dark and often hit with graffiti.
10. Become involved in a local community group and/or environment project that helps keep your community clean and free of graffiti

### **What's Graffiti Hurts – Australia?**

It's the only nationwide non-profit, charity education community institution tackling the issue of graffiti. **Graffiti Hurts – Australia** provides resources to help community leaders initiate graffiti prevention activities, and to educate youth and adults in our community about the impact of graffiti vandalism in and on our neighbourhoods.

To become involved or a supporter of our programs or to learn more on our programs, visit [www.graffitihurts.com.au](http://www.graffitihurts.com.au)